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ABSTRACT

This profile describes various facets of Saint Lucia's National Association of Early Childhood Educators (NAECE), whose mission is "to stand up for the rights of children." The profile first presents the association's 5-year action plan, which includes goals for: (1) technical assistance, for example scholarships for the poor to attend early childhood education centers, acquisition of equipment for centers, and dissemination of information; (2) training, for parent educators and community-based management, for example; (3) services, including selling low-cost materials to centers and parents; (4) local and international fundraising; (5) infant-school liaison, including publication of a manual on child development; (6) evaluation, including assessment of NAECE's impact on early childhood centers; (7) government advocacy, such as contact with specific education officials; (8) institutional development, such as acquisition of necessary office equipment; and (9) publicity, including releasing information on radio and television. The profile continues with a discussion of the rationale of NAECE, particularly its advocacy of community-based early childhood education, followed by a listing of the organization's nine objectives. The profile concludes with a presentation of NAECE's budget for 1996-97. (EV)

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PROFILE OF THE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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Five Year Action Plan

1. *Technical Assistance*

Scholarships for the poor and very poor to attend early childhood education centres with food programme
Home visits to poor and very poor catering for education, nutrition and health
Distribution of dried goods, milk and multivitamins during these home visits
Distribution of food and clothing to poor and very poor parents whose children attend centres
Group meetings with parents on intellectual, social, motor and language development
Acquisition of food programme equipment
Building repairs
Land
Construction
Acquisition of playground equipment
Acquisition of ressource accoutrements
Acquisition of instructional materials
Books for children
Books for teacher training
Setting up a ressource room with books, internet access and E-mail access
Publication of newsletters for professionals and parents
Publication of newspaper articles for public
Publication of audio-visual materials for fathers and general public
Holding membership meetings
Holding board meetings
Holding annual general meetings
Grants to centres for above

2. *Training*

Parent Educators for home visits
Parent Educators for group meetings
Professionals for early childhood Education
Professionals for community-based management
Board members for community-based management
Professionals in financial accounting
Executive members in CXCs, B.A's, M.A's and Phd's as required

3. *Services*

Selling low-cost materials to centres such as paint and so on
Selling booklets for parents as the children's first and best teachers

4. *Local and International Fund-raising*

Soliciting annual donations from local corporate and private patrons in St. Lucia and based overseas for administration of $120,000.00 E.C. minimum yearly

Soliciting annual donations from regional and international private patrons to run the programmes i.e to provide technical assistance to centres of $900,000.00 E.C. minimum yearly

Fund-raising from international agencies for technical assistance, training and evaluation

Annual raffle for participation of Saint Lucian public and to assist in the recurrent expenditure of the centres.

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5. *Infant School liaison*

Encouraging Principals to join centres' boards of management
Publication of manual on child development 5-8 years for teachers of this stage

6. *Evaluation*

Questionnaires for centres before assistance is given
2 yearly evaluation of NAECE
Board members keep a diary related to NAECE's impact on their centres
Evaluation forms at the end of each training session
Assistance of an external evaluator

7. *Government Advocacy*

Send profile to Dr. Kenny Anthony
Send profile to Dr. Vaughn Lewis
Meeting and profile with Minister of Education
Meeting and profile with Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
Profile and letter to C.E.O., Minister of Education
Meeting and profile to Education Officer - Pre-Schools
Annual reports to all of the above
Invitations to general meetings to all of the above.
Termly meetings between the pre-school unit of the Ministry of Education and the NAECE

8. *Institutional Development*

Acquisition of 3 computers
Acquisition of 3 typewriters
Acquisition of 3 fax machines
Acquisition of 3 filing cabinets

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Acquisition of office supplies
Acquisition of office equipment
Acquisition of 3 desks
Acquisition of 1 room for office
Hiring of 4 full time and 2 part-time staff members
Acquisition of 1 photocopying machine
Internet Access
Local fund-raising

- ***Publicity***

Visit media once every year
Give information on radio and TV with respect to:
Parents as Teachers Programme
Newspaper articles featuring important items related to Early Childhood Education Centres

Rationale of NAECE

There are in 1995, 754 Early Childhood Educators in Saint Lucia facilitating 7,041 children between the ages of 0 - 5 in approximately 150 centres. Except for 16 government run Daycares in the charge of the Ministry of Community Development, these centres are all privately-operated. 3,000 poor and very poor children do not attend any centre at all. Only around 20% of children between 0-3 attend Daycare Centres.

Government is spending less than one percent of the total budget of the Ministry of Education and Community Development combined on pre-school and daycare education and is, thus, not meeting many of the present needs of these centres. Nor is the private sector meeting their needs. For instance, most centres find it difficult to

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receive salaries four months of every year. Yet adequate salaries and work conditions are only two needs. There are many others. These include building repairs, adequate water supply and toilet facilities particularly in rural areas, community outreach programmes among many others. Especially, there is a need for the conscientization of the community through the development of community based early childhood education. To meet these requirements, there is, thus, need for all sectors of the country to become involved - parents, other people from the community, business, NGOs, churches and Government.

Early Childhood Educators provide for the social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and spiritual development of Saint Lucian children at a time when 80% of their brain is developing. These Educators are crucial in national socio-economic, political and cultural growth. Through their work societal ills - such as teenage pregnancy, inter-generational poverty and crime - are all alleviated. The growth of a national association with the view of aiding the growth and development of these educators can only be a source of critical national development. It can also serve as a guide to the region.

However, to serve as a guide to the region, the association feels that the future lies in the direction of community-based early childhood education. Community based education is not the only programme guideline which is important in quality early childhood education but it is a vital one. However, NAECE will cater for all early childhood education centers - whether they are for profit, not-for-profit, high cost, affordable, community based and other.

The development of community based early childhood education in terms of a regional network can be

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adequately justified.

In the Caribbean where Government gives such little funding generally to Early Childhood Education and Care and where most parents cannot afford to pay for full quality early childhood education and care, community based early childhood education and care offers perhaps the only viable means of achieving quality.

Yet, the justification for community based E.C.E.s within our definition of it cannot be simply on the more spiritual or theoretical level, although it lies there also. However, it also lies at the belly level of survival. The fact is that through local funding, using the community as its main resource, the only 3 community-based early childhood centres which have worked hard at it have proved they can earn match parent fees. Also, these centres are only able to access overseas funding because they are community oriented. Had they been uniquely for-profit, private companies, they would not have been eligible for grants from all of the funding agencies which have contributed to them up to now. Privately owned centres can have access to overseas funding, however, if they are run by community boards.

There is need regionally for community-based early childhood education centres which promote flexibility, encourage cooperation and coordination. A national network for community-based education centres would also help maximise human resources, minimize duplication, improve communication, increase sharing of resources, increase job opportunities, career awareness as well as increase community involvement.

Moreover, a national network of community-based early childhood education centres is vital because it would give access to funding from the community and funding

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agencies. At the same time, it would increase recreational opportunities, develop community identity and awareness and reduce crime, delinquency, vandalism and apathy.

Addressing the problems stated above will help in the provision of a quality education for children. It will make parents, particularly women, better educators of their children as well as help them break the cycle of inter-generational poverty and inadequate fathering through education. Families will be brought closer together as they too focus on quality care of their children and becoming better educators of their children, Saint Lucia's future.

In Saint Lucia, many children between 0 - 5 have no access to early childhood education. Often, these are the children most at-risk and most at need of quality early childhood education whether it is centre based, home based or based otherwise. There is need for conscientization of Saint Lucians on the urgency of this issue.

Objectives

1. To provide technical assistance and other support for Early Childhood Educators

2. To develop sensitivity to providing quality Early Childhood programmes

3. To provide opportunities for further professional and personal development for Early Childhood personnel

4. To create an association of Early Childhood Educators

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5. To develop the association institutionally

6. To create a membership body of friends of Early Childhood Education

7. To influence policy and procedures on early childhood education

8. To encourage the growth of community participation in early childhood education

9. To liaise with schools catering to the transition years 5 - 8 years so as to continue to promote the participatory, activity, hands on approach during the follow up years to early childhood education programmes.

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ANNUAL BUDGET NAECE, 1996 - 1997

ITEM	IN/OUT SEPTEMBER 96 T0 AUGUST 97
1. Fund-raising	
a. Local Personal donors	21,000.00
b. Local Corporate donors	8,082.00
c. Services	2,000.00
d. Miscellaneous	2,000.00
e. Overseas personal donors	30,000.00
f. Private donor (short-term only)	19,200.00
2. GRANTS	
a. Overseas	50,000.00
b. Government	15,000.00
3. LOANS	
4. DUES MEMBERS	
TOTAL INCOME	147,282.00
1. Resource Accoutrements	22,000.00
2. Grants to centres for for books	1,000.00
3. Schoiarship to poor and very poor	14,000.00

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4. Recurrent expenditure for centres	10,000.00
5. Books for training	2,000.00
6. Monitoring & Evaluation costs	6,000.00
7. Home visits	3,000.00
8. Personel	35,800.00
9. Telephone	12,000.00
10. Travel	10,800.00
11. Stamps	4,000.00
12. Office supplies	14,400.00
13. Audit	3,000.00
14. National Insurance	2,652.00
15. Reimbursement of expenses	4,500.00
16. Miscellaneous	2,130.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	147,282.00

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